

From the Feb. 8 *SoundOff!*

From the Schoolhouse

by Keith Oliver

Sergeant Major's laurels make Dinfos history

When Sgt. Maj. **Raymond V. Cordell** put on the distinctive laurels of a U.S. Army command sergeant major on Jan. 19, he was giving a boost to his alma mater, as well.

Selected this year as one of just five soldiers to be conferred with the Army's most prestigious enlisted rank, Cordell's appointment officially marked Defense Information School as a military unit whose mission calls for a command sergeant major.

"Our students, staff and faculty and our graduates serving worldwide got a shot in the arm from this ceremony," said DINFOS Commandant, Navy Capt. **Curry Graham**. "It properly puts the schoolhouse on solid, professional footing and, by extension, recognizes the critical role our visual information and public affairs specialists have in the Global War on Terror."

Cordell, a Santa Fe native, brings an infantry background to his new posting in addition to extensive public affairs work with special operations units.

Last week marked another institutional milestone for DINFOS when Air Force Col. **Clifton Douglas, Jr.** was promoted to his present rank. Graham pointed out that his California-bred deputy commandant was "the third consecutive Air Force visual information leader to pick up colonel" while serving in the school's number two job.

The Multimedia Department, home to America's battlefield artists and computer graphics jocks, is in the spotlight again. Maryland Public Television's **Ken Day** (host of the program, "Artworks") visited Ft. Meade last week to tape a story set to air later this winter. CBS News, *The Wall Street Journal* and *SeaPower* magazine each featured Navy Lt. **Dave Cummings'** department in recent weeks.

DINFOS' Combat Documentation Department noted with interest that the **Clint Eastwood**-directed "Letters from Iwo Jima" has been nominated for an Oscar. The History Channel interviewed and trained with the department's photo and videography instructors for three days here in September, promoting 'Letters' and Eastwood's companion film, "Flags of Our Fathers."

Using the late Joe Rosenthal's famous flag-raising photo as a launching point, host Geoff Wawro regaled viewers with footage of today's military picture takers and the warrior mindset they must possess to succeed when the bullets are flying. Appearing in the documentary were Army Staff Sgt. **Kyran Adams** of Detroit; Army Staff Sgt. **Giselle Allen** of Queens, N.Y.; Marine Warrant Officer **Nicholas Hizer** of New Philadelphia, Ohio; and Air Force Tech. Sgt. **Mark Kenyon** of St. Louis.

Also featured were Marine Gunnery Sgt. **B.J. Lowery** of Sacramento; Air Force Tech. Sgt. **Norma Martinez** of San Antonio; Marine Sgt. **Wil Santiago** of Ponce, Puerto Rico; and Air Force Staff Sgt. **Maureen Stewart** of Oceanside, Calif.

Public Affairs Leadership instructor, Marine Capt. **Al Eskalis**, was featured speaker for the USMC Combat Correspondents Association's Washington Chapter meeting on Jan. 31. Eskalis, a combat veteran who was Instructor of the Year here during his enlisted service, briefed members on upcoming curriculum changes and offered insights on the Corps' public affairs efforts in Iraq.

The event was held at the storied Washington Press Club. Included in the audience were WWII combat correspondents **Sam Stavisky**, **Cy O'Brien** and **Norm Hatch**; and columnist **John Fales**, the *Washington Times*' "Sgt. Shaft."

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